



## The Founder and The Chapter

“**W**HAT’s in a name?” A great deal, when it’s *Clara Barton Chapter No. 1, The American Red Cross*. The story behind the name is told here briefly. And the Chapter House has a story of its own.

Miss Barton first saw Dansville during a lecture tour in 1866, at a time when her relief work on Civil War battlefields had made her a national heroine. Two years earlier the Red Cross had been established in Switzerland under the Treaty of Geneva, but Miss Barton did not hear of it until 1869, when she went abroad for her health. In Geneva, Dr. Louis Appia gave her a copy of *Un Souvenir de Solferino*, the little book by Jean Henri Dunant which had sparked the movement.

Relief work in the Franco-Prussian War, under the Red Cross banner, strengthened Miss Barton’s conviction that her own government should subscribe to the Treaty of Geneva, as more than twenty nations had done. But after her return to the United States, a nervous breakdown upset all her plans.

A friend suggested that she try the “water cure” established by Dr. James

Clara Barton Chapter No. 1 -- The American National Red Cross

Headquarters: Dansville, New York

## Founder and Chapter (Continued)

Caleb Jackson at Dansville. She decided to do so, arriving late in May, 1876. The natural health methods of the institution and a congenial atmosphere did much for her. For four months, beginning December 1, she rented a brick house at the intersection of Leonard and Elizabeth streets. On April 1, 1877, she moved to a frame house on Health Street, near the "cure" and the Dansville Seminary. She rented this house (not now standing) to serve as her "country" home.

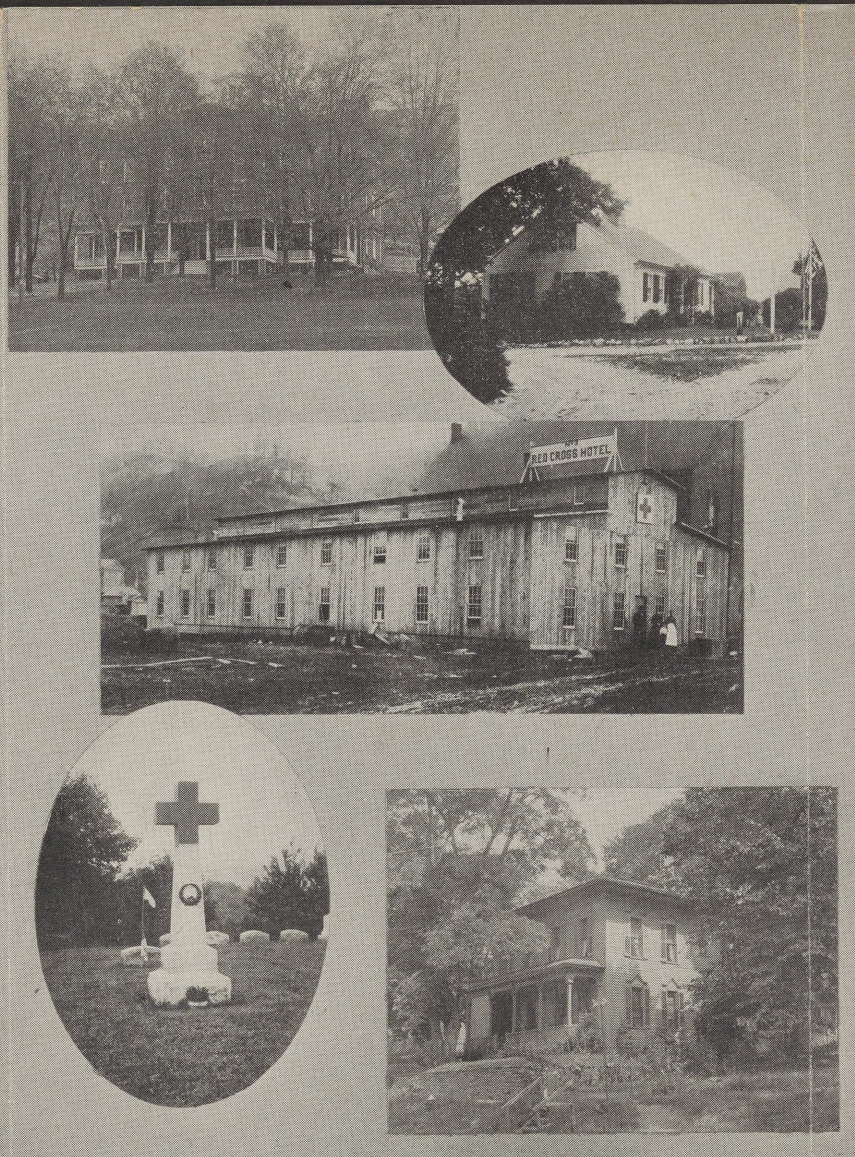
As soon as possible, Miss Barton resumed her efforts to gain United States adherence to the Treaty of Geneva. Despite many setbacks and discouragements, she persisted. When the prospect improved—because of President Garfield's support—she called a group together in her Washington residence on May 21, 1881, and the American Association of the Red Cross was organized. Miss Barton was chosen its president.

After Garfield was shot by an assassin, on July 2, Miss Barton returned to Dansville, saddened and anxious. Her neighbors, deeply sympathetic and wishing to lend her their support, decided to form a local Red Cross society. They asked her to help them draft a constitution and promote the project. Two general gatherings were held—one in the Presbyterian Church, on August 7, 1881, and an organization meeting of the "Dansville Society of the Red Cross" in St. Paul's Lutheran Church on August 22. George A. Sweet was the first president.

In the fall of 1881, Miss Barton led this first local society in the first disaster relief ever undertaken by the American Red Cross—in aid of Michigan forest-fire victims.

Garfield's death on September 19 raised Chester A. Arthur to the presidency. Fortunately, he proved to be a staunch advocate of the Red Cross. He signed the Treaty of Geneva on March 1, 1882, and it was ratified by the Senate on March 16.

In 1886, because of the need to be near national headquarters in Washington, Miss Barton gave up her Dansville home. She bade a touching farewell to her neighbors and to the "pretty town" she had grown to love.



SCENES IDENTIFIED WITH CLARA BARTON

Upper left: The Dansville Seminary (now The King's Daughters' Home), Miss Barton's neighbor on the hillside. Upper right: Her birthplace at North Oxford, Mass. Center: The "Red Cross Hotel" at Johnstown, Pa., after the great flood. Lower right: Miss Barton's Dansville home. Lower left: Her grave in the Barton lot at North Oxford.

When, many years later, the American Red Cross was reorganized, the chapter with headquarters in Dansville was first known as the Southern Livingston County Chapter. After the First World War, it was renamed for Clara Barton at the chapter's request and

was then designated as Chapter No. 1 of The American National Red Cross.

The second local Red Cross society was organized in Rochester with Miss Barton's aid early in October, 1881. It is now the Rochester-Monroe County Chapter.

## The Chapter House

For long years, Clara Barton Chapter had no place that it could call its own. Its meetings were held in the Village Building, in the High School, or in rented quarters. It had to take whatever space was available to carry on accelerated Red Cross activities during two World Wars.

Then, in 1949, a wonderful thing happened. The chapter was offered a large and attractive house as its headquarters—on a residential street and yet centrally located. There were problems, but they were all solved, thanks to the generous co-operation of many persons.

A bronze plaque at the entrance tells the story of the gift in capsule form. It reads as follows:

GIVEN TO CLARA BARTON CHAPTER No. 1  
OF THE AMERICAN NATIONAL RED CROSS  
IN MEMORY OF EMMA HARTMAN NOYES  
A CHARTER MEMBER OF THIS CHAPTER  
BY HER CHILDREN  
NICHOLAS H. NOYES, JANSEN NOYES  
AND KATHERINE F. NOYES  
DECEMBER 28, 1949

The house had been Mrs. Noyes's home for many years. In it the donors had grown to manhood and womanhood. Slight interior remodeling admirably adapted the residence to the needs of the chapter. Many of the furnishings were given with it, so that it continued to wear the aspect of a home. The library (still book-lined) became the meeting room; the music room became the office; the dining room, on occasion, is the production room; a pantry was converted into a canteen; upstairs, a very large bedroom is now utilized as a classroom where training is given in first aid, home nursing, and mother and baby care. One bedroom is reserved for the entertainment of guests.

A comfortable apartment is provided for the caretakers. On the third floor there is ample storage space.

Visitors are interested not only in the house but in its historical treasures, many presented by Miss Saidee F. Riccius, a grandniece of Miss Barton.

Gottlob Bastian was one of Miss Barton's staunch Dansville supporters. In 1881, when plans were being made to organize the first local Red Cross society, the group, including Miss Barton, met at the Bastian Pharmacy and used this old-fashioned walnut desk. It remained in the Pharmacy until 1952, when it was given to the chapter by Mrs. Carl E. Bastian.





Since 1881, when the Dansville Society of the Red Cross was organized within its hospitable walls, St. Paul's Lutheran Church has been modernized and its facilities have been enlarged, but the structure is substantially the same as it was then. It has been the scene of several notable chapter anniversary observances. On its lawn stands the state marker pictured at the left. The street on which the church faces was renamed Clara Barton Street by the Dansville Village Board of Trustees.



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The Chapter House, as beautiful inside as out, was a home similar to many others until it was remodeled under the personal supervision of the owner, Mrs. Emma Hartman Noyes. In her memory it was given to the chapter by her sons and daughter.



A corner of the library, now used as the chapter meeting room. It is lined with cherry book shelving and at one end is a handsome fireplace with a sculptured panel in high relief. In a place of honor hangs the portrait of Mrs. Noyes which is pictured above.

CLARA BARTON CHAPTER NO. 1, THE AMERICAN RED CROSS  
Headquarters, 57 Elizabeth Street, Dansville, N.Y.

*Visitors welcome, Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon  
and 1 to 5 p.m. . . . Saturday, 9 a.m. to 12 noon,  
except during June, July, and August.*